

DRAFT LASSEN COUNTY ACCESSIBLE RECREATION POSSIBILITIES

**THIS IS A DRAFT WORKING LIST OF POSSIBILITIES, NOT GUARANTEED TO BE ACCESSIBLE BY WHEELCHAIRS. Basically, it's a rough working list of places I'd like to go to and see just how 'accessible' they actually might be. So, if you use this list, keep in mind the location may turn out to be obstacle-filled and unsuitable.*

We haven't visited Lassen County in several years. Portions of the Biz Johnson Trail are definitely on my bucket list, particularly if we get a colorful Fall.

Here are some of the possibilities that may be accessible for wheelchair users, slow walkers and wheelers.

SCENIC DRIVES:

Scenic drives can be enjoyed by everyone, no matter what your physical abilities might be. I encourage everyone to make sure their vehicles are tuned for trips, and you should carry extra food, water, and possibly some overnight supplies. Take paper maps whenever possible. Lassen is not a highly populated county. If you take a back road and get stuck, you could be there a while. Cell service is spotty. GPS is NOT reliable.

Volcanic Legacy Scenic Byway: Portions of the Volcanic Legacy Drive go through Lassen County on state highways. The drive through Lassen National Park is always worth the trip, but remember to check to see if the road through the Park is open. In 2017 the Park wasn't fully open until the very end of July. Highway 44 is a good alternate route if the Park route is closed.

<http://www.volcaniclegacybyway.org/>

Modoc Line Trail: <https://lassenlandandtrailstrust.org/modoc-line-rail-trail/>

The Modoc Line Rail Trail is an 85-mile rail trail, which runs from Wendel Road in eastern Lassen County to Likely in southern Modoc County. Currently it is possible to drive segments of the trail with high clearance vehicles (4-wheel drive is recommended). It's also open for equestrians, bicycles and hikers. What is unusual about the Modoc Line Trail is the openness to vehicles as most Rails to Trails locations exclude motorized vehicles. This makes the Modoc Line Trail a truly unique opportunity as it won't be accessible to motorized vehicles forever.

Typically, the Modoc Line Trail sees SUVs and Jeeps, people on ATVs and motorcycles and occasionally bicycles. Hiking is be difficult as this is hot dry territory. If you are a mobility challenged person take proper precautions and plan this trek very well.

This route is not for the faint of heart. I would recommend that people team up and go with a group of two or more vehicles. That way if someone breaks down, there will be help. Definitely let people know where you are going and when you expect to return. I know this lessens the spontaneity aspect of the day, but safety first. People go missing every year and not all of them get found. You might even consider taking something like a Personal Locator Beacon (like hikers do) if you plan to do significant backroad driving.

The most scenic sections of the Modoc Line Trail is generally thought to be between Likely and Madeline and Snowstorm Canyon. The trail is largely on public lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management and follows the route of the historic Modoc Railroad Line, (run by Southern Pacific.) There is pretty good information about the trail at: <https://www.traillink.com/trail/modoc-line-rail-trail/>

For any Scenic Drive, allow lots of time. This is gorgeous country and if you focus too much on your 'schedule' you'll miss a lot of really fun photo opportunities. Go ahead and stop. Admire the views. Scenic drives are about SEEING, not about 'getting there'.

You can pick up paper maps and guides for a variety of Scenic Drives at the California Welcome Center in Anderson. <http://www.visitcalifornia.com/destination/california-welcome-centers-shasta-cascade>

TRAILS of All Sorts

Like many of the counties with an abundance of public lands, there are all kinds of trails and back roads to explore in Lassen County. The region is popular with hikers, backpackers, mountain bikes, and walkers, too. Hunting is a way of life here. Photographers find inspiration at every turn.

Bizz Johnson National Recreation Trail runs between Westwood and Susanville in Lassen County. It cuts through the conifer forests of the high country into the dramatic Susan River Canyon. The rail trail passes numerous historic sites utilizing tunnels and trestles along the way. It's considered an awesome scenic trail.

Biz Johnson National Recreation Trail: <https://www.traillink.com/trail/bizz-johnson-national-recreation-trail/> and some youtube videos of the trail <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EEVaXC9kyCs&t=131s>

Portions of the trail are labeled wheelchair accessible. To make the most of your opportunities, a good all-terrain wheelchair or all-terrain rolling walker would be a huge help. Your best bet to identify good segments for your abilities is to stop by the Susanville Railroad Depot or the Lassen Land and Trust offices and ask questions. You need to do this as trail conditions vary and what was accessible last year may not be usable for wheelers this year.

<https://www.sierranevadageotourism.org/content/bizz-johnson-national-recreation-trail/sie0d35502862309644e>

When to go? Fall foliage would be awesome for photography!

Susanville Ranch Park is a 1,100-acre park property owned and managed by Lassen County and the Bureau of Land Management as a shared-use recreation area. It is unclear if any of the 65 miles of trails are wheelchair suitable. None appear to be classified as ADA so think in terms of all-terrain mobility devices designed for dirt trails. However, this may be a good location if you have a motorized mobility device like a Zoom. I simply can't tell from their trail descriptions. It's another instance where you need to call ahead.

<https://www.hikingproject.com/trail/7002783/old-paul-bunyan-logging-road>
<https://lassenlandandtrailstrust.org/susanville-ranch-park/>

This is a good time to mention the ADA rules for using motorized Personal Mobility Devices. Sometimes people assume a disabled person cannot use a device appropriate for them on a pedestrian trail.

<https://www.ada.gov/opdmd.pdf>

The Susanville Ranch Park web site seems to be non-functional in terms of maps. No contact is given except Lassen County Public Works by phone 530-251-8288 or mail. If you want to check things out, give them a call.

<http://www.susanvillerranchpark.com/index.html>

Eagle Lake Trail: Eagle Lake is a unique natural lake. It's quiet, peaceful, and is a wonderful location for landscape and wildlife photography (Osprey and Eagles). According to the USFS there is a 5.2 mile paved trail (one way) around a portion of Eagle Lake' shoreline. There are several developed campgrounds around the lake, some of which are identified as having wheelchair accessible campsites. Fishing is great, too! It's not all that far from Susanville so it would also make a great day trip with a picnic by the lake or go camping for a week or two.

<http://www.eaglelakerecreationarea.com/>

FOREST AND LAKE RECREATION IN LASSEN COUNTY

Lassen National Forest Camping

Lassen National Forest Accessible Recreation Opportunities:

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/detailfull/lassen/home/?cid=stelprdb5106692&width=full>

Please note that the list posted in 2017 seems out of date. Several locations do not appear to actually have the accessible features listed. Specifically, the fishing platforms on Hat Creek are either absent or in a state of disrepair. Hopefully this will be fixed soon.

Eagle Lake is a popular Lassen County feature. Fortunately, there are several USFS campgrounds at Eagle Lake with some degree of accessibility. **Eagle Lake campgrounds:**

<http://www.eaglelakerecreationarea.com/camping/> Merrill Campground specifically mentions 8 wheelchair accessible campsites, and Eagle mentions 2.

BLM

Finding information on accessible recreation on BLM managed lands is incredible difficult via the www in 2017 as they are revising their web site. My suggestion is to stop by the nearest BLM office (or call) and ask a lot of questions.

BLM has campgrounds at Eagle Lake. <https://www.blm.gov/visit/eagle-lake>

The North Eagle Lake campground is developed and the most likely BLM location to have accessible features, though they are not described (as yet) on their web site.

Wildlife Photography Opportunities

Lassen County has conifer forests on the west side that maintained a thriving timber industry for decades. The eastern portion of Lassen County is high desert. It is a dramatic change in climate from the west side. That change in climate means a change in bird and animal species living there. That means OPPORTUNITIES!

Pick up a Visitor Guide for ideas: <http://www.lassencounty.org/visiting/recreation>

Wildlife Refuges in Lassen County

<https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Lands/Places-to-Visit>

State Wildlife Refuges are great places to view and photograph wildlife. Often there are opportunities to do some exploring as well. Each Refuge is different and designed to provide habitat for a variety of species.

While these areas are used for many types of recreational activities, few will have ADA facilities. Some areas may be considered wheelchair accessible by using all-terrain mobility devices and using the seasonal road systems (dirt roads, gravel roads). This is really one kind of recreational feature where you really do need to call someone familiar with the areas to figure out where to truly enjoy the outing.

For general information about wildlife refuges in Lassen County, call the California Department of Fish and Wildlife Northern Region Redding office at (530) 225-2300.

Of those in Lassen County, only the **Honey Lake Wildlife Area** actually mentions handicap parking and accessible features. **Ash Creek Wildlife Area** mentions some facilities but it is unclear whether any are wheelchair accessible. Phone ahead and ask. Some refuges in Lassen County may be best seen by road. For more information, call the area at the Northern Region Redding office at (530) 225-2300.

Honey Lake Wildlife Area: <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Lands/Places-to-Visit/Honey-Lake-WA>

Honey Lake Wildlife Area has 7,600 acres of sagebrush habitat surrounding a shallow lake in the Great Basin Desert. Many migratory birds are attracted to this wetland including tundra swans. There are excellent opportunities to see large flocks of migratory and nesting waterfowl, birds of prey, and passerines, sandhill cranes, beavers, pronghorn antelope, and deer. The area includes the Dakin and Fleming Units. Only the Dakin Unit shows handicap parking and a Mobility Impaired hunting blind. Call to learn if the Dakin Campground is accessible (and ask about restrooms). For more information, call the area at (530) 254-6644 or the Northern Region Redding office at (530) 225-2300.

Dakin Unit Hunt Map: <https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=87812&inline>

Ash Creek Wildlife Area: <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Lands/Places-to-Visit/Ash-Creek-WA>

Activities: fishing, hunting, camping, wildlife viewing, hiking, and birdwatching. Restrooms, Kiosk. "Ash Creek is one of the most remote, least improved, and most pristine of all of CDFW's Wildlife Areas. Located in the heart of Big Valley, these approximately 14,400 acres preserve freshwater wetlands created by the seasonal flow of six streams, including Ash Creek. In addition to 3,000 acres of natural wetlands, other natural communities include vernal pools and upland sagebrush. Among the mammals seen here are pronghorn antelope, beaver, and bobcat. Bird species include numerous waterfowl species, sandhill cranes, falcons, sage grouse, short-eared owls, and bald eagles." For more information, call the area at (530) 294-5824 or the Northern Region Redding office at (530) 225-2300.

Map: <https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=87737&inline>

There are additional refuges in Lassen County, but they show no facilities listed (such as restrooms). They may provide opportunities to drive through the area or around the area for photo opportunities and there may be parking areas that aren't shown very well on the downloadable maps. You might want to incorporate these locations as possible stops on a Scenic Drive.

- **Willow Creek Wildlife Area:** <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Lands/Places-to-Visit/Willow-Creek-WA>
- **Biscar Wildlife Area:** <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Lands/Places-to-Visit/Biscar-WA>
- **Bass Hill Wildlife Area:** <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Lands/Places-to-Visit/Bass-Hill-WA>
- **Doyle Wildlife Area:** <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Lands/Places-to-Visit/Doyle-WA>
- **Silver Creek Wildlife Area:** <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Lands/Places-to-Visit/Silver-Creek-WA>